

# ALSACE - LORRAINE

DAVID · STARR · JORDAN

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**ALSACE-LORRAINE**



# Alsace-Lorraine

*A Study in Conquest: 1913*

*By*

DAVID STARR JORDAN



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TO THE  
"FRIEDENSFREUNDE"  
OF  
ALSACE-LORRAINE



"On changerait plutôt le cœur en place  
Que de changer la vieille Alsace." (Old rhyme.)

"Die beste Grenzefestung ist ein  
zufriedenes Grenzvolk." (Jacques Schlumberger.)

"The noblest sign of Culture is  
respect for the Liberties of other people." (Schiller.)



## PREFATORY NOTE

In his clever analysis of the "German Enigma," Georges Bourdon uses these words: "We may speak of Alsace-Lorraine; it is better to listen while she speaks."\*

The present volume is the result of an attempt thus to listen while Alsace-Lorraine spoke for herself. In the summer of 1913 the writer visited the chief towns in the provinces and had speech with many good men and women representing every possible point of view. They freely and frankly expressed their hopes and fears. Their opinions are summed up here as far as possible in their own language as expressed in condensed translation from both German and French. In general, each quotation is typical of the opinions of hundreds of men and women. Except in a few cases in which I quote from articles in print, I mention no names, as in these tense times I would subject no individual to personal criticism. Whatever value the book may now have lies in its being in a sense a historical

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\* *Il faut parler d'Alsace-Lorraine, il vaut mieux écouter quand elle parle.* (L'Énigme Allemande.)

#### PREFATORY NOTE

document, a record of things *as they were* before the great crash came. In its way, it is a "Morituri Salutamus" of our own time—the last word of those "about to die." For whatever the outcome of the war which now rages in and over Alsace and Lorraine, the life of those provinces can never again be what it was in 1913. But shall not the spirit survive as it has outlived lesser cataclysms? The dread of war, its futility as well as its terrors, formed a dominant note in Alsace-Lorraine in 1913. Since then little information has come to me across the lines. It is known that upper Alsace and Lorraine have suffered most pitifully, that many of the "Nationalists" have been condemned under charges of treason, and that some of these have escaped to France. One Alsatian friend writes me that he "had never thought war could be so cruel and lawless and that officials and people could so lose every notion of morals and law."

The reader must bear in mind that this account was written in the late summer of 1913. It stands as then, save for some verbal changes and footnotes. Just before the outbreak of the war my record closes.

#### PREFATORY NOTE

I am under special obligations to my colleague and companion, Professor Albert Léon Guérard, for sympathetic interest and invaluable help. In the magazine *Nineteenth Century and After* for February, 1915, Professor Guérard gives a faithful account of our experiences and of the views of the people we met.

Part of my notes were printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1914, under the title of "Alsace-Lorraine, a Study in Conquest." I am indebted to the editor, Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, for the privilege of reprinting.

I am also under obligation to Miss Ruth Putnam, author of the admirable volume, *Alsace and Lorraine from Cæsar to Kaiser*, for a sympathetic reading of my manuscripts. Also, as usual, to my wife, Jessie Knight Jordan, for continuous aid.

Stanford University.  
September, 1915.

D. S. J.





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# **ALSACE-LORRAINE**



# ALSACE-LORRAINE

## I

### THE "NIGHTMARE OF EUROPE"

#### *The Border Provinces*

THE history of Alsace and Lorraine has been that of a vigorous, intelligent, optimistic, freedom-loving folk living on the border between great military powers and subjected at intervals to deeds of violence and to the interruption of all progress, industrial, social and intellectual. Through no fault of their own, these provinces, as the transition belt between France and Germany, have become the crux of some of the most difficult problems of Europe. Around the mourning figure of Strasburg in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, symbolic of the distressed province of Alsace, the

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war spirit of France has rallied for forty years. The France menaced with dissolution in 1871 was again, in a fashion, unified by the emotions which the fate of Alsace-Lorraine still inspires. The call of "*la patrie mutilée*," "*Notre deuil sera votre péril*," has become again, since the Affair of Agadir, the occasion if not the justification of that contradiction in world-politics, a "republic in arms."

### *Unification Through Hate and Fear*

On the other hand, the result of the seizure of those provinces, and of the distrust that policy inspired, has tended directly to hold Germany together and indirectly to enforce a scale of military expenditure which has appalled the world. This again has hung as a dead weight on German progress, internal and external, material and spiritual. It has helped to turn the nations' interests over to the control of a blind militarism which rides gloriously toward a fall. It has been the core around which the suicidal war preparedness of Europe has crystallized. The Treaty of Frankfort which fol-

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lowed the Franco-Prussian conflict was not a treaty of peace. It was devised to keep hatred alive. Its purpose was not alone to welcome back to the German Empire the "lost brothers," but also to keep Germany unified against France. And thus it comes at last that the question of Alsace-Lorraine has helped to divide Europe into two hopeless alliances for whose persistent antagonism no rational remedy is in sight.

"Thus," observes William Martin, "amid all her griefs, it is the glorious rôle of Alsace-Lorraine to safeguard the moral unity of two great nations concentrated on the same thought."

Yet all this arises through no fault of Alsace and Lorraine. They have given no incitement for war. Their part was passive. They are only the excuse or the occasion for war talk. France can do nothing to abate this condition, and Germany in her present temper has done nothing.

Germany says to her province of "Elsass-Lothringen": "I will not give you freedom until I am sure of your love." Alsace responds: "I can not love



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you till you set me free." Lorraine replies: "I am not of your family; I can not understand your ways." Then Germany says to France: "We can not be friends until you forget." France answers: "You will not let me forget, and so I can not."

This is the "vicious circle" (*"le cercle vicieux"*) which most good men in Alsace-Lorraine have hoped some time to break.

### *"The French Key to Germany"*

The people of these provinces, torn suddenly from France as a result of incidents in which they were not consulted, held by Germany avowedly not for their own sake but also and primarily as appendages of their two strong fortresses, Strasburg and Metz, have naturally passed through the gamut of feelings instinctive to peoples conquered in war.

Through the open door of Strasburg and Metz, according to Bismarck, German territory had twenty-three times suffered from unprovoked invasions by marauding hosts of France. It was the plan of von Moltke to close these doors, to hold the

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key of France and Germany—the "*Clausis Germaniæ Galliæ*" of Louis XIV—in his hand, so that such disturbances should forever cease. At the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871, France threw the provinces overboard to save herself from further desolation. And ever since that time Alsace-Lorraine has been "the wound in the side"—"*la plaie dans les flancs*"—of the great empire to which the provinces were attached.

### "*La Guerre de Revanche*"

Through all these years the emotional patriotism of France has looked forward for a turn of the tide, a "war of revenge," as the word *revanche* is inadequately translated. For forty years, mourning wreaths have been laid every day on the statue called Strasburg in the Place de la Concorde in Paris. For forty years the local press has used the fate of Alsace to stir the shallow springs of national egotism or the deeper sources of national patriotism. For forty years the boulevards have dreamed of the "*Guerre de Revanche*," the "*Guerre*

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*d' Honneur*" which should restore to France her abducted daughters of the Vosges.

But these emotions have slowly waned as the new generations have come and gone. Since the collapse of French militarism through the scandals of the Dreyfus affair and the paltry heroics of Boulanger, France has lost faith in revenge by force of arms. Serious men doubted first the possibility, then the wisdom and at last the righteousness of the "War of Revenge." And of late, the war spirit of France, such as it is, has been due mainly to fear. It has been engendered by the unprecedented war preparations of Germany and by the speeches and writings of the military-political group known as the Pan-Germanists.

### *The People not for War*

It is certainly true (1913) that no considerable body of rational men (outside the privileged groups and the professional militarists) in either France or Germany desires war or would look upon it other-

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wise than as a dire calamity. Costly and dangerous war preparations are thrust on the people who perforce acquiesce in the operation of machinery they do not control. Where the people do not govern, somebody else does and in his own interest. And the people of Germany have never had control of the affairs, civil or military, of their own nation. "Any other country may possess an army," said a German officer to Georges Bourdon, "the army possesses Germany."\* And the possession of Germany by the army is a constant menace to France.

The chauvinists of France are relatively harmless in spite of their evident sincerity, for their influence on politics is limited and waning though receiving a new lease of life since the "*Affaire Agadir*" in Morocco in 1911. The corresponding party in Germany is more menacing because its members constitute a privileged class near to the seat of power and claiming the right to lead in national patriotism.

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\* Bourdon: *L'Énigme Allemand*.

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### *Pan-Germanism*

The Pan-Germanist League (*Alldeutschtum Verband*) was founded on April 9, 1891, on the occasion of the exchange with Great Britain of Zanzibar for Heligoland, the former involving colonial, the latter naval, possibilities. Its avowed purposes were to deepen national feeling and to force the German people to realize their duties as a world power in directing the fortunes of "nations overseas." It designed to influence Germanic education along nationalistic, militaristic and reactionary lines and to bring about "practical results" in foreign politics, that is, financial gains. Favorite slogans or catchwords were "World Concerns," "Slavic Peril," "British Menace," "British Monopoly," "French Revenge." In all ways the League held before the people the "splendors of war" as contrasted with the impotence and the "immorality of peace." It was primarily a backfire against democracy and an instrument of spoliation. The organization now numbers about thirty thousand per-

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sons, two thousand three hundred in foreign lands, the whole constituting an affiliation of military groups, war-traders, landed gentry, clergy, exploiters, professors, travelers, business agents and others, the common purpose being the extension of German military force, of German domination in Europe as well as in Asia and Africa and of German discipline generally. The group has stood more or less opposed to the policies of the German civil government, but by means of pre-arranged crises and diplomatic complications, it has of late years carried the government with it while keeping the popular feeling aroused by struggles over non-essentials. The Pan-Germanists have been especially active in attempts to suppress the use of alien languages, French, Danish, Polish and Flemish, and to unify the politics and customs of the people on a rigidly Prussian basis. In Alsace this process is known as "*Entwelschung*" ("deforeignization"). Pan-Germanism represents in fact the secret moving springs of Prussian reaction, autocracy and militarism.

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### *"La Course Vers l'Abîme"*

At the present time (1913) Germany leads in the scramble for military efficiency, in the "race toward the abyss"—"*la course vers l'abîme*," as the French critics have called it. She is spending all her national income and more in "national defense," while under the impulse of fear and distress France adds a third year to her two of conscription, each nation thereby expanding the swollen fortunes of its own war-traders by whom and for whom the rival programs of "revenge" and "expansion" are largely stimulated.\*

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\* "The great calamity and danger of Europe to-day are these enormous armaments. No honest statesman can say that he sees in the present attitude of politics the necessity of war. No great power is threatened. There is no menace to peace that could not be immediately dispelled by a firm protest of the peaceably disposed majority of nations. There would be, therefore, no danger to any people, but a vast and immediate gain to all from a general disarmament. It need not be simultaneous. It is idle to say that France fears an invasion from Prussia or Prussia from France, and an honest understanding among the western nations would keep the peace from the eastern side.

"Why then is this awful waste of youth and treasure

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### *"Le Cauchemar de l'Europe"*

The jealousy and rivalry between France and Germany have no fundamental reason. The honest folk on both sides of the Rhine cherish no real hatred of each other. An "*entente cordiale*" across the Rhine is as natural as across the British channel.\* If this were brought about, the bilingual provinces of the Vosges could form, as they naturally should, the bond of union and of sympathy between the nations they unite. As Canada forms such a bond and a pledge of mutual understanding between Britain and the United States, so should Alsace-Lorraine act as a bridge between France and

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continued? I believe from no other motive than to sustain the waning prestige of kings. Armies are to-day only useful in Europe to overcome the people, or by groundless wars to divert their attention from domestic misrule. The false and wicked equilibrium by which now the interest of one man weighs as heavily as those of millions of his fellow-creatures would be utterly destroyed." (John Hay to William H. Seward, February 5, 1868, from *Life and Letters of John Hay*, W. R. Thayer, I, 303.)

\* *Die grossen Kultur-völker hassen Einander nicht.*  
(Von Ferlach.)



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Germany. And that it may some time do so is the fervent hope of all its good citizens. Not love of France or hatred of Germany constitutes the problem. To the Alsatian the desire for freedom and peace outweighs all other national questions. For more than forty years these people have been men without a country—in the German Empire but not of it—French in spirit but shut away from France. Somewhere, anywhere, they hope to find an honorable and equal place. But the Alsatian's conception of freedom is that of individual opportunity, never of being a cherished cog in the wheels of a military or industrial machine in the guidance of which he has no part.

It is said that the center of a cyclonic storm is perfectly quiet. In Alsace-Lorraine as a storm center, this assertion holds true. There is scarcely any part of Europe where the war-spirit is lower or the war-maker less in evidence. The chief problem of these people is to secure equal rights within the empire, and the chief differences of opinion hinge on whether these rights will be secured sooner

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by insistence or by patience. If Alsace-Lorraine is "the nightmare of Europe"—"*le cauchemar de l'Europe*"—the fault lies with Europe, not with Alsace-Lorraine.\*

### *Alsace-Lorraine, a Battleground*

Alsace-Lorraine now finds no hope in armed conflict for its people have seen war and know what it is. The Franco-Prussian struggle was fought mainly in Lorraine. In the seventeenth century, Alsace was a battlefield of religion. The ancient "Chronicles of Thann" tell how the land was ravaged in the Thirty Years' War. Towns destroyed have never been rebuilt. In one commune, according to the record, there was not for twelve years a wedding, nor for fifteen years a baptism.

"So often as the Swedes gave battle to the Imperialists, so often did the Imperialists make war upon the Swedes. It was an endless massacre!"

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\* "I have an apprehension that this violent laceration and transfer is to lead us from bad to worse and to be the beginning of a new series of European complications." (Gladstone to Granville; Morley's *Life of Gladstone*.)

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Alsace still remembers too vividly the awful bombardment and ruthless burning of Strasburg in which the library of the university was wantonly fired and houses of non-combatants were destroyed, while the people of Baden were merry-making across the river.\* She has not forgotten the bloody fields of Weissenburg, Fröschweiler and Wörth.

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\* Professor Rudolphe Reuss (*Histoire d'Alsace*) gives these details:

"At Fröschweiler, the besieger, Wörder (named "*Mörder*" by the people) attempted to terrorize the people so that they would exert an irresistible pressure on the commandant to surrender. He spared no effort, night or day, to increase this terror, giving not a moment's respite to the unfortunate people who, hidden in cellars, saw the destruction or burning of their houses. When any attempts were made to put out any fire, shells were thrown directly upon the building in question.

"In Strasburg the people saw burned successively the Church of the Dominicans, called the New Temple, the museum of paintings and sculpture of the Aubette, the two public libraries with their treasures, artistic and literary and their precious manuscripts. The next night, the roof of the immense nave of the cathedral took fire and the copper plates melted in blue flames, a spectacle of magnificent horror, while the projectiles demolished the stone lace-work of the tower and broke the splendid stained glass placed there by the piety of the middle ages. The end sought by these savage acts was not attained and the spectacle of so much ruin awoke in the

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Lorraine has before her waking eyes the campaign of Metz, and the hideous scenes of Victor Hugo's *Année Terrible* of 1871. Not far from Metz is the awful ravine of Gravelotte and the war-swept heights of St. Privat, St. Hubert and Saint-Marie-aux-Chênes. All about are the scenes of the futile sorties of Bazaine from the fortress of Metz, toward Noisseville and Colombey and westward along the highway that leads through Gravelotte, Rézonville and Vionville to the French border at Mars-la-Tour. These communes for two hundred square miles are graveyards rather than farms. And then not far away in France, just outside the boundaries

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hearts of the people a profound sorrow and fortified the sentiment of hate and inextinguishable scorn for the authors of these nameless destructions.

"During the siege, 300 civilians, men, women and children, were killed by the bombs of the enemy; more than two thousand were wounded, and then when the white flag was fired upon there was an explosion of sorrow and of universal anger. During this time, the incendiary bombs gathered in successively what remained of public buildings, the palace of justice, the railway station, the church of the civil hospital, the theater, the prefecture, etc. At the end of the siege, the citadel, the Faubourg des Pierres, the Faubourg National, were for the most part a mass of ruins."

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of Lorraine, occurred the horrors of Bazeilles, its massacre of citizens as well as soldiers and the "obscene sea of slaughter" of Sedan. The battles of Napoleon III were largely fought on the soil of Alsace-Lorraine, and the provinces themselves were simply offered up in final sacrifice.

*"Optants" ("Emigrés") and "Immigrés"*

War feeling may have its roots in these provinces, but its manifestations are mainly outside. After the treaty of Frankfort, "the *optants*," "those who chose to remain French," were allowed to leave the provinces. The number thus leaving in the years 1871-'73 is commonly stated to have been 270,000,\* about one-fifth of the total population. These constitute the "*emigrés*" or emigrants. Germans who have since come in from "Old Germany" are spoken of as "*immigrés*," "*vieux allemands*," or "*Altdeutsche*." After the original "*optants*" or emigrants followed later about as many more, but their number seems never to have been accurately

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\* This figure is probably in excess of the real number, which is apparently unknown.

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counted. According to a French authority,\* 658,532 persons in all ultimately left Alsace-Lorraine. September 30, 1872, was the last day of grace for the "*optants*." On that day, according to the author of *La Prochaine Guerre*, "All those who had means of transportation rode in carts, wagons, carriages, running over the black roads. Whole families drove on their cattle. Old men dragged themselves on, leaning on the shoulders of young women who bore at the breast new-born children. Sick men who wished not to die German were carried bodily that they might draw their last breath on the frontier of Nancy and thank heaven to die on the soil of France. Another group in like fashion reached the frontier of Belfort."

The spirit of these men and women who chose thus to leave their native land expresses the noblest impulses of the human heart. They abandoned their homes, not primarily through hatred of Prussia, not because they "would not become Germans,"

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\* *La Prochaine Guerre, par un Soldat*, 1884. This author's estimate is probably also an exaggeration.

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not even because they wished to remain French. Their ruling motive was their unwillingness to place themselves or their sons in such a position where, as conscripts in a foreign army, they would be forced to fight kinsmen and friends. It was no passing emotion; it was grounded deep in religion and conscience. We who to-day are spectators should remember that those men and women of forty years ago were not merely actors in the great tragedy of Europe, a play on which the curtain is not yet rung down\*—they were themselves the very tragedy.

The *émigrés* have naturally had a large influence on their kinsfolk in Alsace. Similarly, the population of neighboring cities of France and Switzerland, notably Nancy, Belfort and Basle, has been greatly increased and strengthened by the influx of Alsatians. In each of these cities the number of *émigrés* runs into the thousands. Very many continued their journey on to the United States. "Since 1871, society in Lorraine has been

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\* Written in 1913.

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skimmed by emigration as well as paralyzed by persecution."

The University of Nancy, near the frontier in French Lorraine, grew up through the influence of the *émigrés*, taking the place of the University of Strasburg as the eastern outpost of French culture. The records of France show a long and impressive list of scholars, men of science, poets, novelists, statesmen and generals of Alsatian or Lorraine stock.

### *The Declaration of Alsace-Lorraine*

After the Treaty of Frankfort, the twenty-eight delegates of Alsace-Lorraine at the National Assembly at Bordeaux, on February 17, 1871, presented this solemn declaration:

"Alsace and Lorraine are opposed to alienation. These two provinces, associated with France for more than two centuries in good and in evil fortune and constantly opposed to hostile attack, have consistently sacrificed themselves in the cause of national greatness; they have sealed with their blood



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the indissoluble compact that binds them to French unity. Under the present menace of foreign pretensions, they affirm their unshakable fidelity in the face of all obstacles and dangers, even under the yoke of the invaders. With one accord, citizens who have remained in their homes and the soldiers who have hastened to join the colors proclaim by their votes or by their action in the field, to Germany and to the world, the unalterable determination of Alsace to remain French."

To Europe at large these words were addressed:

"Europe can not permit or ratify the abandonment of Alsace and Lorraine. The civilized nations, as guardians of justice and national rights, can not remain indifferent to the fate of their neighbors under pain of becoming in their turn victims of the outrages they have tolerated. Modern Europe can not allow a people to be seized like a herd of cattle; she can not continue deaf to the repeated protests of threatened nationalities. She owes it to her instinct of self-preservation to forbid such abuses of her power. She knows, too, that the unity of

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France is now, as in the past, a guarantee of the general order of the world, a barrier against the spirit of conquest and invasion. Peace concluded at the price of a cession of territory could be nothing but a costly truce not a final peace. It would be for all a cause of internal unrest, a permanent and legitimate provocation of war."

### *The Protest of Alsace-Lorraine*

Notwithstanding the declaration, the National Assembly felt itself forced to abandon the two provinces. When this decision was reached on March 1, the final solemn protest was made by M. Grosjean.

"Delivered, in scorn of all justice and by an odious abuse of force, to foreign domination, we have one last duty to perform. We declare once for all null and void an agreement which disposes of us without our consent. The vindication of our rights rests forever open to all and to each one in the form and in the degree his conscience shall dictate. In the moment we quit this hall, the supreme thought we find in the bottom of our hearts is a thought of

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unutterable attachment to the land from which in violence we are torn. Our brothers of Alsace and of Lorraine, separated at this moment from the common family, will preserve to France, absent from their hearthstones, an affection faithful to the day when she shall return to take her place again.”\*

Then on March 24, turning toward Germany, Frédéric Hartmann spoke these words, classical and historic, the key to the whole question of Alsace-Lorraine:

“By the fact that you have conquered us, you owe us a status in law, a civil and political constitu-

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\* *“Livrés au mépris de toute justice, et par un odieux abus de la force, à la domination de l'étranger, nous avons un dernier devoir à remplir. Nous déclarons encore une fois nul et non avenu un pacte qui dispose de nous sans notre consentement. La revendication de nos droits reste à jamais ouverte à tous et chacun dans la forme et à la mesure que notre conscience nous dictera. Au moment de quitter cette enceinte, la pensée suprême que nous trouvons au fond de nos cœurs est une pensée d'inaltérable attachment à la patrie dont nous sommes violemment arrachés. Nos frères d'Alsace et de Lorraine séparés en ce moment de la famille commune conservent à la France absente de leurs foyers, une affection fidèle, jusqu'au jour où elle viendra y reprendre sa place.”*

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tion in harmony with our traditions and with our customs."\* But this wise advice passed unheeded. "Germany looked for the reaping of fruit she did not know how to cultivate."†

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\* *"Par cela que vous nous avez conquis, vous nous devez un état légal, une constitution politique et civile en harmonie avec nos traditions et nos mœurs."*

† Paul Albert Helmer, *Alsace under German Rule*.

## II

### THE GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

#### *"No Question of Alsace-Lorraine"*

TO ALL inquiries concerning Alsace-Lorraine, the German answer begins invariably with the words, "There is no question of Alsace-Lorraine." Amplifying this as the German response:

"There is no question of Alsace-Lorraine: the land is German by tradition, by history, by language, by conquest and by military necessity. Alsace-Lorraine must be forced to resume the Teutonism her people had relinquished."

To this we may add the words of Professor von Treitschke: "We know better how to govern Alsace than the Alsatians know themselves."

Now to summarize the German position. In German law it is claimed that Alsace and Lorraine are territories won by conquest confirmed by the

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Treaty of Frankfort. As such, all former rights have lapsed and there remain only those that the empire in its wisdom and friendliness may grant. France has no further concern in the matter. The relations in international law were settled once and for all by the Treaty of Frankfort. "Alsace and German Lorraine\* were restored to the newly founded German Empire† to which they belong. As France tried for years to suppress the German language and German culture in Alsace,‡ it becomes Germany's national duty to wean these people from the French."

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\* At the Treaty of Frankfort all of the old French province of Alsace, save the city of Belfort and its environs, was ceded to Germany, with about a third of old Lorraine. The rest of Lorraine still remains in France.

† "That a newly founded institution could receive *back* territory it was too young to have lost seems a trifle illogical." (Ruth Putnam.)

‡ There seems to be no historical foundation for this statement. Ernest Renan asserts that France, almost alone among the nations, has never used force to extend her language. The efforts to strengthen nationality through the unification of language has kept a large part of central and eastern Europe in constant turmoil. This is notably true of the Balkans, of Austria, Poland and Russia as well as of Germany.

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Says Professor Wilhelm Förster, the astronomer of Berlin:\*

“Since France in 1866 demanded the whole left bank of the Rhine and in 1870 attacked Germany by force of arms, it became clear that Germany must for her own security extend her borders across the Rhine and not leave the powerful fortress of Metz on her frontier any longer in French hands.

“But Germany has throughout treated the people of Elsass-Lothringen in embittering fashion. By this means, the painful influence of the conquest on the feelings of the French people has been kept alive and constantly renewed. In spite of this, a vote by the people of Alsace-Lorraine would now (September, 1913) probably show a majority in favor of remaining part of Germany. This would mainly be on economic grounds, as the fruit and wine industry of Elsass-Lothringen is in closer relation to the interests of Germany than those of France.

“How can the relations between Germany and

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\* In a personal letter, September, 1913.

## THE GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

France be made better? Certainly through giving the people of Elsass-Lothringen the greatest possible independence with freedom to continue to use the French language and the like. To this end, there must rule between Germany and France and for that matter through Europe generally, a higher socio-political relation than at present. This should begin with a customs-union and with parliamentary control. The International Court needs organization and expansion in power until its jurisdiction includes the whole earth."

Says Professor Rudolf Eucken of Jena:\*

"Elsass-Lothringen is for us Germans no longer a question. The land, the seat of an old German race, is a piece of Germany; in its language and its customs, German.† We Germans are sensitive

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\* In a personal letter, September, 1913.

† "This affirmation is too simple to apply to the complex situation of a frontier country. As a fact, Alsace even in the Middle Ages, though it spoke a Germanic dialect, was in the orbit of French culture. The Gothic artists who built Strasburg Cathedral came from the Isle de France or had learned their art there." (P. A. Helmer, *Alsace under German Control*, p. 8.)



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to all discussion of this question by foreign people as a revival of the French restlessness toward this problem. Inside of Germany I wish to see granted to Elsass-Lothringen all possible independence, but that is a problem forever and wholly German."

(Here, however, is the crux of the problem: what constitutes "all possible independence inside of Germany"?)

The opinion of Doctor Hans Delbrück, professor of history in Berlin, is stated as follows in an interview published in the *London Daily Mail* for August 30, 1913.

"Are you in earnest?" asks Professor Delbrück. "Do you mean that I, a serious-minded German, should waste your time and mine discussing such a question? . . . ."

"I can conceive of no other single question within the scope of international politics, with the possible exception of disarmament, on which the German nation would chorus a more thundering 'No,' than of surrendering the conquered provinces. Alsace-Lorraine's connection with the empire is the very last

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word of irrevocability. We might as well be asked to surrender Prussia as to give up the territory bought and paid for at Gravelotte, Mars-la-Tour, St. Privat and Sedan. Restoration of Elsass-Lothringen is not debatable for us in any form whatsoever. No proffer of territory in exchange anywhere on the face of the globe could induce the German government even to consider such a transaction. The anti-German sentiment there is a nebulous and vanishing force. It is kept up for the most part by clerical agitators. Compare the condition of the Roman Catholic church in France and in Germany and you will find, with me, that it is very likely that these men would be just as anti-French as they are now anti-German were the tricolor to supplant the black-white-red of Imperial Germany. Alsace-Lorraine now has a Parliament of its own under a constitution which grants the inhabitants of the provinces the maximum of political liberty and self-government. France is confined to Metz and the adjacent frontier regions. Alsace and Lorraine were German long before they were French. Our

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folk-song literature is replete with songs of Strasbourg.\* Goethe attended the university there. When we took Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, we regained what was our own. Why did we retake it? Because the safety of German territory demanded it. France openly coveted the left bank of the Rhine. What else was the real underlying cause of Napoleon's war? Alsace-Lorraine had to be taken if that part of our Fatherland west of the Rhine was to be permitted to develop in peace and safety as an integral part of the German nation.

"Sir Joseph Compton Rickett tells us that the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine would be the end of *revanche*. . . . It would be the very beginning. The French would say: 'If the Germans are supine enough to abandon Alsace and Lorraine, they will not be strong enough to resist pressure still further East.' Our defensive position, instead of being stronger, would be incom-

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\* "O Strasburg, meine Strasburg  
Du wunderschöne Stadt,  
Die seit zwei hundert Jahren  
So viel gelitten hat."

## THE GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

parably weaker after we had scuttled out of Metz and Strasburg. We should be in exactly the same perilous military situation as we were before 1870. This is a state of things not even the most rabid social democrat could tolerate. . . . It would be a pitiable politician and a sorry strategist who would begin putting the national house in order for the great emergency by abandoning the 'Watch on the Rhine.' ”\*

In 1881 the Emperor William I stated the case with extreme precision. “Germany would leave her eighteen army corps and her 42,000,000 people on the field of battle rather than surrender a single stone of the territory won in 1870.”

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\* As to the war of 1870-71, it is not clear that Napoleon III was primarily the aggressor. It is Bismarck's claim that he entrapped the emperor of France into this position and by means of a forged or altered telegram. On both sides foreign war was welcomed as a cure for difficulties at home. It was Treitschke's dictum that foreign war is the swift remedy for disunion or waning patriotism. We may put the case in this form: Each emperor wagered his Rhine provinces in the game of war. The German won and by the rules of that game Alsace-Lorraine went to Germany and that was the end of it, the people not being consulted and under imperialism having no rights to be considered.

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### *The Pan-Germanist's View of Alsace*

The view of the Pan-Germanist in regard to the treatment of Alsace is set forth in an article under the caption of "*Wäre Ich Kaiser*" (Were I Emperor), by Daniel Frymann, published in the summer of 1913.\* This runs substantially as follows:

"Were I emperor, there would be a dictator, not a Statthalter in authority. No student should enter the University of Strasburg till he had spent two years at a university elsewhere in Germany. All private schools should be closed and all public schools should be taught in German. There should be no public meetings in which French is spoken, and no private gatherings save in the presence of a German official. No newspapers should be printed in French, and each paragraph in French should have by its side a German translation. Each citizen as he comes of age should declare his eter-

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\* This appeared in the *Elsässer Courier*, a German paper in Colmar, as copied from the *Strasburger Post*, in July, 1913.

## THE GERMAN POINT OF VIEW

nal allegiance to Germany. He should give his pledge not to buy secretly any newspapers, books or periodicals in French. All this under pain of expulsion from the land."

### *Elsass-Lothringen as Reichsland*

Elsass-Lothringen has not been made a state of the German Empire. It is not a member of the Imperial Confederation. It is merely "*Reichsland*," Empire's land; that is, government land, to be administered in the general interest of the federated states. German authorities assert that its present status is "almost exactly parallel with that of the territories within the United States, or perhaps still more exactly with that of the Federal District of Columbia." The district is allowed certain privileges, not *rights*, of self-government, but not to the prejudice or disadvantage of the recognized states. As in the United States territories are held in tutelage until they are ready for self-government, so is Elsass-Lothringen held in training until its people are ready for autonomy within the Ger-

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man Empire. To this end, they must be educated in the spirit of "*Deutschthum*" and must be imbued with German traditions and with German culture.

"These people are Germans after all. Our professors all tell us so. It is out of sheer perversity that they call themselves French. And yet, the more we cudgel them, the more French they claim to be and the less they like us."

"Naturally, the business of Elsass-Lothringen must be conducted in the German language. The people must be familiar with German methods of government and modes of thinking. They must think as Germans, for the Empire is not an assemblage of states and cities and people. It is a confederation of Germans, by Germans, and for the Germans."

All this, it is claimed, involves no real hardship, for the same requirements exist throughout the Empire, and all residents of the Empire, Danes and Poles, Saxons, Swabians, Bavarians and Prussians alike, must conform to it. All Germany is

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“under the ferule” of training in “*Deutschthum*.” Meanwhile, it is asserted, German rule in Alsace-Lorraine is consideration itself compared with methods employed by other nations in dealing with a conquered people. This is, of course, quite true if Germany is to be contrasted with some other nations, Russia, Poland, Serbia and Turkey, for instance. Instead of the knout or the dagger, Prussia inflicts pinpricks.

### *The Speech of Alsace-Lorraine*

It is to be noted that of over two millions of people in Alsace-Lorraine (about 1,600,000 in Alsace, 600,000 in German Lorraine) only about one-sixth are of French origin or even speak a French dialect as a mother-tongue. Yet only the humblest peasants are without knowledge of French, which language is spoken by preference by all the educated classes. In German Lorraine more than half the population, those of the northeastern part (Saarburg, etc.) speak a German dialect. In a small part of the north (about Diedenhofen) the



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inhabitants use the *patois*, also Germanic, of their neighbors of Luxemburg. In Alsace, the boundary between French and German dialects follows approximately the summit line of the Vosges, the French overflowing from the barren rounded summits (crossed by "strategic railways" which reach only to the French frontier) into a number of valleys on the eastern slope. Belfort, the only city in French Alsace, is most intensely French. The Germans failed to capture its strong fortress in the war of 1870 and in the final settlement they left, perforce, this town to France.

But in Alsace almost everywhere, as in Lorraine, French is the language of culture, the speech preferred among the well-to-do.

### *Germanic Origin of the Alsatians*

The originally Germanic character of the people of Alsace is plainly shown by the family names. Passing down Rufacherstrasse, a leading street in Colmar, I note these names on the door-plates and signs: Lange, Heilgendorf, Scherrer, Schultz,

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Weill, Schönbrod, Schaffer, Casper, Roths, Hacker, Didier, Werkemann, Bürger, Spira, Meyer, Pfleger, Wilberger, Klein, Schanzler, Becker, Luttin, Levy, Rueff, Moore, Geegert, Hidgen, Eglensdorfer, Heyne, Schoy, Kayser, Hild, Wertheim, Gerwig, Heimburger, Wyler, Burlen, Albrecht, Schuler, Helmer, Lentz, Blum, Matter, Engasser, Wittersheim.

In the directory of Mühlhausen, the first forty-six names are Aab, Abegy, Abèle, Aberlen, Abermann, Aberth, Abraham, Abrahamsohn, Abry, Abt, Ach, Achenbach, Acker, Ackerer, Ackermann, Adam, Adams, Adelbrecht, Adelhold, Adis, Adler, Adloff, Adelung, Adolph, Adnau, Achen, Aeble, Aeby, Aegister, Aegler, Aeschmann, Agde, Agrippino, Ahr, Ahrens, Aicheler, Aischelmann, Aigle, Aichinger, Aigner, Ailuger, Albanesius, Alber, Albert, Albich, Albinus.

But two of these (Abèle, Aigle) have a French origin, and one (Adams) is apparently English. Three (Agrippino, Albinesius and Albinus) represent the Teutonized Latin widely spread over Ger-

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many in an earlier day. It is worth noting that all the republican or nationalist leaders of Upper Alsace have German names, while in Lorraine, in several cases, German conservatism is masked by names unqualifiedly French.

Bilingual the provinces are to-day and for the most part bilingual they have been for generations. Really they are tri-lingual, for the German and French dialects of their peasants diverge widely from the speech of Berlin or Paris.

### *“Entwelschung”*

To revert to the process of *“Entwelschung,”* its advocates maintain that it is salutary and necessary. The continuity and efficiency of the Empire demand it. It has been honestly and persistently pursued in Elsass-Lothringen for forty years, and it is open to no question or revision. In so far as it has failed, the fault lies, it is argued, with hesitation or leniency in administration, not with the plan itself.

The *“Affaire de Noisseville”* in 1908 may serve

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as an example. The Statthalter (governor), Count Zeppelin, permitted the building of a monument to the French soldiers who fell at Noisseville. Its dedication was witnessed by one hundred thousand people. These waved the tricolor and sang *The Marseillaise* (itself an Alsatian tune composed at Strasburg by Rouget de l'Isle) in defiance of all proprieties. The effect was to produce a revival of French sympathy which swept Lorraine off her feet and threatened to undo in an hour the loyalty resulting from years of patient German tutelage.

The German outlook for the future does not grow promising. This the officials sometimes unwillingly admit. "*Ich bin pessimist*" ("I am pessimistic"), says one of these. Lorraine abuts on France as does Alsace on Switzerland. Paris is nearer to each than is Berlin. For the well-to-do it is within a day's run in an automobile. The freedom of France and of Switzerland has its effect on the temper of the people, for it appeals to their own traditional spirit. The most persistent opposition to the Prussian régime now appears in

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the districts most thoroughly Germanic by blood. It centers especially in Ober-Elsass and in its two chief cities of Colmar and Mühlhausen, which town its inhabitants persist in calling "Mulhouse," a meaningless French derivative of a dialect form for millhouses.

But whatever the discouragements, it is certain in the minds of the German authorities that Elsass-Lothringen can not be made an independent nation, nor yet a free state of the Empire. Still less can it be given back to France. To the Germans, Alsace is German at heart and belongs in the German Empire. To abandon even French Lothringen would be to dishonor the fifty thousand graves of brave Germans who gave their lives to win back the lost provinces and to secure the German Rhine. The international politics of Germany hinge on romantic sentiment as well as on the military value of its fortresses and the "military necessity" provided by the iron mines of Eastern Lorraine. But even Eastern Lorraine, German by blood and speech,

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shares its love of freedom with Alsace.\* In all the provinces the political unrest is more freely expressed by men of Germanic blood than by the French.

In the words of a German secretary at Strasbourg, "Though forty years is a long period in the lifetime of a man, still longer in that of a woman, it is but a moment in the history of a race. Alsace lies where races meet. She has been part of Germany, of Austria, of France, of Germany again. She has resisted all changes with characteristic obstinacy. She has been reconciled, more or less, with each in turn, and she will be reconciled again." The re-establishment of the monarchy in France was strenuously opposed by Alsace, and she voted persistently and almost alone against the overwhelming majority which confirmed the "Second Empire."

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\* "German-speaking Lorraine is at heart the most French and anti-German part of the province." "Ober-Elsass is the most troublesome part." (A German editor.)

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### *The Zabern Affair*

The affair at Zabern (Saverne) took place in the fall of 1913, after my visit to Alsace. I may here briefly describe it, following the accounts given by Eduard Bernstein of Berlin in the *London Nation*, December, 1913, and January, 1914.

Zabern is a small town at the foot of the Vosges in Northern Alsace. A garrison of soldiers is stationed there. A young lieutenant, von Förstner, a boy barely of age, offered ten marks from his pocket to any recruit who should cut down any "*Wacke*" who might assail him. "*Wacke*" (vagabond) is a military slang word used to designate Alsatians. Afterward the lieutenant walked through the village with a patrol of three or four soldiers whom he ordered to stand with fixed bayonets before a shop where he bought chocolates and cigars. Later, placing a loaded revolver beside his plate in a restaurant, he pierced the bill of fare with his sword because it contained the French word "*poularde*" for chicken.

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It is possible that the people who saw this may have laughed at him. But to laugh at this boy would be to discredit the uniform which he wore. The colonel in command, von Reuter, took the affair very seriously, made the garrison ready for siege, had the open places in the town cleared by force, and without consulting the civil authorities, arrested men right and left, including among them the judge and other members of the court on their way from the court room. All of these, the judge excepted, in spite of official protest, were shut up in a coal cellar until morning. Incidental to this, the boy lieutenant made an onslaught on a group alleged to have laughed at him and severely slashed a lame shoemaker, striking him on the head with the sword. These acts were plainly illegal, but the colonel assumed entire responsibility for them. He further expressed a regret that he had not used a machine gun on a community so devoid of respect for the uniform. The lieutenant made the plea that he could not fight a duel with a cobbler, a man beneath his class. Von Falkenhayn, Min-



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ister of War at Berlin, suggested that as an alternative he might have run his sword through the first offender.

A court-martial decreed a mild punishment for von Förstner, but its findings were speedily quashed in the interest of the "sanctity of the King's uniform." In spite of dissatisfaction in the Reichstag, the acts of the officers at Zabern were fully upheld by the Imperial authorities. It appears that "Lieutenant von Förstner struck a lame bootmaker with his sword and wounded him in the head because he feared that the unarmed man might try to assault him, although the lieutenant was protected by a number of musketeers." This lieutenant and another concerned "were obviously unconscious of the illegal nature of their acts," the responsibility for which was fully assumed by the colonel in command. And the final result, in spite of the protests in the Reichstag and elsewhere, was the complete victory of the military group.\* The civil

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\* " 'Comrade' Peirottes, representing the people of Zabern, quoted the words of the former chancellor, Prince

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authorities were censured for not protecting the army from ridicule, and the civil authority in Germany was definitely placed below martial law. In the words of the foreign minister, von Jagow, "The uniform of the army is a symbol of the sovereignty of the state, and no insult to it must therefore be suffered without immediate repression." A royal decree of 1820 was resuscitated to cover the case. "It authorizes military officers to take the law into their own hands when they are convinced that the civil authorities have not the power or the will to repress disorder. This decree was promulgated by Metternich at the period of the worst European reaction against the movement for constitutional government. It has long since been abrogated by new laws and prescriptions and it has consequently fallen into oblivion. Doubtless Colonel von Reuter

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Hohenlohe: "They desire to drive the population of Alsace-Lorraine to desperation. They try to provoke uprisings to drown them in blood. We used to speak in our country of a second or military government. To-day we cannot speak of a second or military government, to-day the military authorities are the government!" (Walling: *The Socialists and the War*, p. 85.)

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knew nothing of its existence, and it was probably discovered by some student searching for precedents for the colonel's conduct." This event definitely fixed the supremacy of military over civil authority. Yet, as Bernstein further observes: "The spirit of the German people is hardly more bellicose than that of the British people. Men submit to militarism for all sorts of reasons, except for its real *raison d'être*—WAR."

Doctor Ludwig Frank, the brilliant Socialist leader,\* earnestly protested in the Reichstag that Civil Law and Civil Government must be secured against military infringement. "We ask no revolutionary deeds from you (the Reichstag). We only hope that you may have the courage to apply the rights you already possess, that you may have the courage to be victors. Gentlemen over there (the Conservatives) take the title of their rights from the *débris* of the past. We take our rights and our power from the foundations of the present. We, 'the mixed company calling itself the Reichstag';

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\* Since killed in battle, 1914.

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we, 'the *rabble*' with the millions and millions behind us; we are the true and veritable framers of Germany's future."\*

"Reform in Germany," says Bernstein, "would mean political revolution. It would mean the total breakdown of the *Junker* influence in Prussia, which means the transformation of the historical Prussia into something else. And people with otherwise quite advanced ideas look upon this contingency as a sort of abyss."

After this overthrow of civil authority and the failure of the Reichstag to remedy the condition, von Wedel, Statthalter of Alsace-Lorraine, and Mandel, Secretary, tendered their resignations as unwilling to go any further in the direction of repression.

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\* Walling, *The Socialists and the War*.

### III

#### ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

##### *Autonomy in Alsace-Lorraine*

**J**UST now (1913) Elsass-Lothringen asks for autonomy, for Home Rule within the Empire. No man familiar with imperial politics expects or hopes to see the region returned to France. It is argued by some Germans that the Alsatians demand Home Rule not for the good of the people, but because it prevails in the other twenty-five states, and Alsatians want all privileges their neighbors enjoy. Under German law, however, Elsass-Lothringen is not a state, but a *territory* of the Empire, "*Reichsland.*" It was placed in this peculiar position as a contribution to the unification of Germany. Being owned jointly by each and all of the states, it was expected that common possession would add to the cement which holds them together and under the protection and domination of Prussia.

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The "Reichsland" has no executive head of its own choosing. It is governed from Berlin by a Statthalter appointed by the Emperor, the power of the Statthalter and his Ministerium at Strasbourg being derived from the Emperor. The constitution of the "Reichsland" was granted from Berlin (in 1911) at the instance of Prince von Bülow. It was not framed by the people nor their representatives. It was not accepted by them, nor is it subject to their amendment. It can be recalled at any time at the will of the Bundesrath and Reichstag.

In strict theory, therefore, the "Reichsland" should have no representation in the Imperial Councils. Three votes in the Reichstag are, however, granted to Elsass-Lothringen in a total of sixty-one, but with the peculiar provision that such votes are not to count if Prussia should thereby gain a majority. The device was adopted in the interest of the smaller states as a slight protection against overshadowing by the great one.

Under the constitution of Elsass-Lothringen the

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upper chamber of the Landtag or local assembly is made up in eccentric fashion. About half of the deputies are appointed by the Emperor; most of the others are chosen as representatives of religious bodies, chambers of commerce and other organizations, while a few are elected by the people.

### *“Lois d’Exception”*

Much of the local friction in Elsass-Lothringen centers about edicts or “laws of special protection” (*Abwehrgesetze*), known locally as “laws of exception” (*lois d’exception*). These measures, it is claimed, are necessary in Alsace-Lorraine, as similar or still more rigid statutes are required in Schleswig-Holstein and Posen, both of which are made parts of Prussia. “The necessity arises from facts in the history or geography or temperament of the provinces concerned. These districts all border on unfriendly nations, and from those emanate influences which Germany finds it necessary to combat.”

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Of the "laws of exception" I may name a few which came to my attention:

The Germanization of the University of Strasbourg.

The dissolution in Metz of "Sport" societies with French bugles.

The dissolution of Souvenir Societies for the decoration of French graves.

The suppression of the Alsatian Society of Mechanical Construction (its leader being French).

The limitation (to about one in two weeks) of the rendering of French plays.

The limitation of instruction in the French language. This, in Metz, is given *in German* to students who use French in daily speech and in their games. The lessons occupy one hour a week.

The occasional banishment or imprisonment of ardent "nationalists," or even of visitors from France or Switzerland.

The revival for a time of the passport system in order to exclude French relatives of Alsatian families.



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The requirement of the use of German for business signs and notices.

These and other similar regulations locally called "*coups d'épingle*" (pin pricks), have been variously ignored or resented according to the temper of individuals. Street signs can be written in French by special permission only. Barbers have been punished for calling themselves "*Coiffeur*" instead of the now orthodox German "*Friseur*." The menu of the hotel is now "*Speisekarte*" and its highly technical French must be replaced or accompanied by its equivalent in unintelligible German. The word "*restaurant*" can no longer be used; an eating house is a "*Restauration*." A dressmaker can not deal in "*Modes*," but in "*Moden*." A merchant in Strasburg was fined for announcing "*Liquidation Totale*"; it must be "*Totale Liquidation*." After paying the fine he put up a sign: "*Hier wird Deutsch gesprochen*."

"The struggle against the French language," says Paul Déroulède, "is one of the most ridiculous aspects of the pan-germanist campaign. French

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souvenirs, French monuments, French tombs, French cookery, French bills of fare, French visiting cards, French teaching, French Christian names, French gymnasium suits, French bugles, excite the wrath of the pan-germanists. They would even germanize red skirts and blue skies. They would raise between Alsace and France, her former country, a Chinese wall."\*

In a pamphlet on *The Nightmare of Europe*† Doctor Albert Gobat of Berne compared the German Empire to an eagle which, "when threatened by another of its kind, thrusts its claws deeper into the flesh of its victim." "The old policy of the Allemanni in enslaving their conquered foes is revived in the nineteenth century. Not slavery in a physical or economic sense, of course, but touching their purest, most intimate and most legitimate feelings. Slavery of the body may be more easily borne than constraint of the spirit."

Yet it is claimed that these measures of defense

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\* Preface to Zislin's *Sourires d'Alsace*.

† *Le Cauchemar de l'Europe*.

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are not "laws of exception," but in fact the ordinary statutes which prevail throughout northern Germany. The sign, "*Strengstens Verboten*" "most severely forbidden," is said to occur far more frequently in Prussia than in Alsace. The Prussians are used to it. They have grown up under socialistic paternalism until it is accepted as a condition of life.\* Bethmann-Hollweg has been forced to admit that "one can not make a Prussian out of a South German or an Alsatian." The Alsations rebel at paternal direction. When their letter boxes (*Boîtes aux Lettres*) became "*Post-briefkasten*" they resented the Prussian advice placed on them that "all letters should be addressed, stamped and put in the box."

### *Efforts Toward Conciliation*

As a step toward mutual conciliation the Statthalter von Wedel issued (August, 1913) a proposal of education in substance as follows, calling

\* "Kings, princes, titles, compulsory military service and class distinctions seemed as meet, proper, and natural to us as long ears on a donkey." "A Hyphenated American," in *Saturday Evening Post*, 1916.

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on "all well-disposed people of the provinces to join in active union to help the growing youth. The purpose of the organization is the bodily, spiritual and social soundness of the children of Elsass-Lothringen. It would promote and deepen the love of home and nation. Excluding all political and religious ends, it should provide for nature study, for tours in the country, for physical exercise and healthy games of all sorts, as well as for social and hygienic study and reading of good history." Such measures would tend to broaden the outlook and turn the attention of the Alsatians from past misadventures to social and educational progress.

### *Alleged Mistakes in Management*

Those who believe in the future of German "*Entwelschung*" recognize more or less clearly certain mistakes committed in the past. Some of those indicated to me by different persons may be cited.

*Too great leniency has been shown:* willingness to compromise in Lorraine with French sympathy, in Alsace with Swiss republicanism. The Statt-

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halters Manteuffel, Zeppelin and von Koeller have been especially censured for giving consideration to local opinion.\*

*Too great severity* has been shown: attempts to teach love of Germany by displaying Germany's

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\* "Germanization by gentle methods, by the prestige and personal ascendancy of a man of high culture and of great nobility of soul (Manteuffel, 1887) had not only proved a failure but was forever discredited in German public opinion. . . . They felt a naïve admiration for themselves and believed they had accomplished things of which no other people in the history of the world could boast. . . . The past seemed small, mediocre and despicable. . . . Very soon, in view of their economic development and the pretensions of their World Politics, their ancient and glorious title—a nation of poets and thinkers—sounded almost like an insult to German ears. If the Alsatians failed to acclaim the German Empire as they should have been inclined to do, according to the Germans, it was because they were 'terrorized' . . . Since Alsace was terrorized by France, it was necessary for Germany to terrorize her still more." (P. A. Helmer, *Alsace under German Rule*, pp. 19, 20.)

"To let a people or still more a fraction of a people decide international questions, for instance, which state shall control them, is as good as making the children of a house vote for their father. It is the most ridiculous fallacy that human wit has ever conceived." (Prof. Lusson, *Das Kulturideal und der Krieg*; quoted by Romain Rolland, *Au-Dessus de la Mêlée*.)

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

most unlovely side. For this the military leaders and their Pan-Germanist associates have been under criticism.

*We have wrongly held Alsace-Lorraine responsible for outbreaks of chauvinism in Paris*—a matter in which these provinces had no part.

*It is a mistake in these days to hold conquered territory:* and Germany is not fitted for the task of dealing with people not exactly like her own. She has never been willing to try. Germany is avowedly no "melting pot" of races and has no desire to become such. To the policy of taking French territory at all it is said that Bismarck was strongly opposed, and he yielded to von Moltke's insistence on the necessity of retaining Strasburg and Metz, to which, in the military sense, Alsace and Lorraine are but outlying appendages.\*

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\* Bismarck is quoted as saying: "As you see, we are keeping Metz, but I confess I do not like that part of the arrangement. Strasburg is German in speech and will be so in heart ten years hence. Metz, however, is French and will be a hot-bed of dissatisfaction for a long time to come. The emperor has too many foreigners for sub-

## ALSACE-LORRAINE

*It was a mistake not to make Alsace-Lorraine frankly part of Prussia*, thus bringing the territory wholly and directly under Prussian control. This course was followed with other acquisitions—the free city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, till then the capital of the Empire, Schleswig-Holstein, Posen, as well as historic Hanover.

*It was a mistake not to make the Emperor himself Landsherr of Alsace-Lorraine.* This would perhaps have touched the springs of patriotic feeling and brought Alsace-Lorraine into line with Prussia.\*

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jects as it is. We have had more than enough trouble with our Poles though they have been benevolently governed, God knows! And we shall have still more with these Lorrainers, who hate us like poison and will have, very likely, to be roughly handled, whereas the good old German *Elsässer* will be treated with the utmost consideration. They will soon like us better than they ever liked the Frenchmen, who were never weary of poking fun at them, gibing at their accent and generally holding them up to ridicule." (*Conversations with Prince Bismarck*, collected by Heinrich von Poschlinger, edited by Sidney Whitman, London and New York, 1908, p. 98. The above is quoted from W. Beatty-Kingston.)

\* This possibility has been held over Alsace as a sort of threat. The mayor of Strasburg entered a complaint



## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

*It was a mistake to unite Lorraine with Alsace.* The two districts had scarcely anything in common until they were torn from France. Since that time common experience has given them a common spirit. To unite them has been to transfer to each the complaints of the other. Lorraine, largely French, chiefly rural and altogether Catholic, appears more docile than Alsace. It is said that in Lorraine there are still peasants who shout "*Vive l'Empereur*," supposing that "*l'Empereur Guillaume*" is the natural successor of Napoleon III. Four hundred years ago, 1543, when the kings of France threatened the autonomy of Lorraine, Edmund de Bollay "traced the portrait of his people." Says he:

"As for the nature of the men, in so much as Lorraine lies between France and Germany, the Lorrainers partake of the nature of both nations.

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of some industrial injustice done to that city. The Emperor replied (May 13, 1912): "Listen, up to here you have known only my good side. If this situation lasts we shall suppress your constitution and annex you to Prussia." (Quoted by George Trumbull Ladd.)



## ALSACE-LORRAINE

From France they are courteous, humane, liberal, prompt and agile in war. From Germany they are robust, bold and ready to fight, unflinching and without fear of death. By the two they are joyous and friendly toward one another. So under all conditions and with praiseworthy customs, they are singularly devoted to their natural province and lord. Thus, as one sees in history, there is no nation under the sun more ready to defend and sustain the honor of its natural prince than the nation of Lorraine.”\*

The scholarly Abbé Charles Thilmont of Obergingen in Lorraine ascribes to his people “the calmness and coolness of the German with the delicacy and exquisite sensibility of the French. They are profoundly attached to religion as the last surviving interest, but they hate extremes, clericalism as well as sectarianism. Time which softens all things has changed the ferocious scorn of our conquerors and the first aversion of the defeated. The

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\* Quoted in the *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine*, July 15, 1911.

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

bruises were beginning to be less felt. The Alsatian people have too much practical sense not to know that they can not go on eternally in the politics of sentiment. We finished by recognition of the accomplished fact and the acceptance of a situation we can not change."\*

"We in Lorraine think sometimes with our heads and sometimes with our hearts. With our heads we accept a situation we can not change. But who can read the heart?" It is said that the Lorrainer is tenacious but undemonstrative—"Le Lorrain rage à froid" (The Lorrainer rages coldly).

In Alsace the dominant note is that of democracy. The clue to its spirit is found not primarily in its love of France but in its love of liberty, a survival of the old Germanic freedom which is still alive in the South and West, its expression more or less stifled by militarism.†

The undercurrents of feeling are not likely to

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\* *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine*, Strasburg, July 15, 1911.

† Bismarck is quoted as saying: "We have many measures at our disposal. We Germans are accustomed to govern more benevolently sometimes more awkwardly,

## ALSACE-LORRAINE

appear to the casual visitor in Strasburg and Metz. Since 1871 there has been a large immigration to these cities from the rest of Germany, the *Vieux Allemands* or *Immigrés* of common speech. To-day Metz is about three-fifths German, while in Strasburg about two-fifths are *Immigrés* and three-fifths Alsatians. The Germans have added greatly to the wealth and importance of the two cities. In Metz especially, large additions have been built up from German capital. "Strasburg, the quaint and busy city on the Ill, with its high-pitched roofs and the huge lace-like spire of its red minster, with its cheerful and apparently well-satisfied people, seems to have little in common with the tragically draped statue in Paris."

but in the long run really more benevolently than the French statesmen. We are, moreover, able to grant the inhabitants a far greater degree of individual freedom than the French institutions and traditions ever permitted." (Quoted by Edmund von Mach, *What Germany Wants*.)

But Alsace asked no freedom as a "grant," only as an inherent right of free men. And this France, even amid the reactions of the Second Empire, always respected. (D. S. J.)

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

Strasburg is prosperous, its general administration effective, and business always dreads a change.\* Its future seems unquestionably German. Every visible trace of French culture has been sedulously stamped out. But "no solution can be imposed by force." The old question underlies all this seeming peacefulness, and "the most stiff-necked Prussian official comes at last to realize its existence." Even in Strasburg the Alsatian remains Alsatian. He is a "citizen of no mean city" which must bide its time. The more sympathetic among the *Immigrés* ultimately reach the same point of view.

Outside of Strasburg and Metz—even in considerable towns like Colmar and Mühlhausen—the *Immigrés* constitute but a small fraction of the population. So far as "expansion" is concerned, crowded Germany gains nothing by annexation, for the lands of Alsace still belong to the Alsatians. The Germans can not get a foot of ground there

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\* "The government of Germany is feudalism; the government of German cities is business efficiency."

## ALSACE-LORRAINE

without buying it. This they could do before 1870, and this they can do in any part of the earth. The germanization of Strasburg and Metz is scarcely more marked than the germanization of manufacturing cities outside of Germany—let us say of Milwaukee or of St. Louis or of Sao Paolo in Brazil. German immigrants, “*Hungerpilger*” (Pilgrims of Hunger), are crowding into Basle and Zurich, perfectly willing to assume Swiss citizenship to escape German militarism and German taxes.\* German merchants and manufacturers have “expanded” throughout the world. With the growth of German industries there has come to Metz and to Strasburg, as well as to other German manufacturing towns, a large accession of unskilled “cheap labor,” much of it temporary, from Poland and Italy. But this, while tending to prevent the return of the provinces to France, con-

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\* A citizen in Basel said to the writer: “*Es sind manche tausend Elsässer in Basel, weil sie nicht Deutsche werden wollten. Es sind noch mehr tausende Altdeutsche in Basel die für Arbeit kommen, auch wollen sie Schweizer werden.*”

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tributes nothing whatever to the problem of conciliation.

*It was a mistake to try to conciliate the old Alsatian aristocracy.* Some of these accepted Imperial favor, but the class as a whole repudiated all alliance with their conquerors. Throughout both provinces the old bourgeoisie speak French, read French, think French culture superior to German and regret that such culture is in a degree denied to their children. The blending of races and race interests takes place first at the bottom of the social scale. It was our experience in Mühlhausen to walk into the Bourse and find three hundred men—well-to-do Germans to all appearance and with German names—transacting their vociferous business all in French. The use of French in common life is advancing downward in spite of and largely because of official pressure in the other direction.

*It was a mistake that the constitution of 1911 was not granted twenty years earlier.* This might have given the Alsatians an earlier interest in Imperial as against local politics. It is said that the

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government has encouraged the development of a socialist party in Alsace to give a new line of division as against "particularism." The constitution handed down from above has not satisfied the people, and it has again emphasized the fact that the provinces are a "wound in the flank" of a great empire. Moreover, it is in itself contrary to German legal traditions. If Alsace-Lorraine is "*Reichsland*," its people are not peons or feudal servitors who go with the land, but are in some degree at least German—"Second-class Germans" ("*Deutsche zweiter Klasse*")—in the bitter words heard in Alsace.

It is claimed that *more appointive offices should have been filled by local selection*. That there is little local participation in administration is not wholly the fault of the government. In view of the protest of Bordeaux, the "*Indigènes*" could hardly accept Imperial appointments without the feeling or the accusation of being renegades to their own people.

*It was a mistake not to control the private*

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*schools for girls as well as those for boys.* It is the women of Alsace-Lorraine who, more than the men, keep alive the traditions of France. A business man may fit his politics to his affairs, a woman never.

*It was a mistake to bring minor officials from Prussia.* It is freely admitted that the German civil service has not been adequate for its duties, being on the whole lacking in foresight, tact and fairness. "It was Germany's mistake to send to Elsass-Lothringen North Germans and Protestants, stiff, haughty, totally devoid of tact and sympathetic insight, who behaved like so many little Geslers." While the Ministerium itself has contained many men of high order of scholarship and intelligence, "the lower positions have been largely given to non-commissioned officers used to the harsh discipline of the Prussian barracks." Under the German constitution all officials can say: "Criticize and blame as much as you please; so long as I enjoy the confidence of my superior, I shall not change my course." "So long as the military,



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pietistic, feudal, monarchical element rules in Germany, so long will there be no change in its administrative methods.”\* “The officials in Strasburg have little social relations with the people. There are enough of them to form a society of themselves and even several cliques of their own.”

*The greatest mistake in German management has been its subordination to the military group in Berlin.* “The Pan-Germanist League is preparing for war, against the will of the Emperor, whom they

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\* Says Althoff, a German essayist:

“We Germans are the most learned nation in the world and the best soldiers. We have achieved great things in all the sciences and arts; the greatest philosophers, the greatest poets and musicians are German. Of late we have had the foremost places in the natural sciences and in almost all technical spheres, and in addition we have accomplished an enormous industrial development. How can you wonder that we are political asses? There must be a weak point somewhere.”

This weak point is the lack of long foresight, lack of breadth of outlook, lack of ability to see beforehand the final results of an alluring line of policy, above all the inability to put one's self in another's place. The statement of Althoff above quoted was used by von Bülow as an argument against allowing manhood suffrage in Prussia—“the German people are incapable of self-government.” (D. S. J.)

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

have practically obliterated ( 'annihilé' ). Hence the desire to keep hatred alive in Alsace-Lorraine. The Emperor himself seems to be friendly and peace-loving." But his efforts at conciliation were not always well planned, as for example, in his restoration—in Prussian fashion and at Alsatian expense—of the old castle of Hohkönigsburg in the Vosges.

The fundamental error, the Alsatians claim, is the *failure to grasp the spirit and purpose of 'Alsace.'*\* In the words of a professor in the Germanized University of Strasburg: "I do not know these people called 'Nationalists' in Strasburg and Colmar and Mühlhausen. I have never met any of them; I don't want to meet any of them; I don't know their names; I never read their papers; I

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\* "*L'une des fautes commises par les Allemands à l'égard des Alsaciens-Lorrains, et peut-être la plus grave, est de n'avoir compris ni leurs regrets ni leurs espoirs. La doctrine pangermaniste repose sur une conception particulière, et d'ailleurs fausse, de l'évolution historique, et celà explique qu'elle demeure, malgré les efforts de sociétés puissantes, une pensée des lettres.*"

(Martin: *La Crise Allemande.*)

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don't see where their *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine* gets its subscribers."

"It is as easy," said an Alsatian to me, "to make the feelings of Alsace understood at Berlin as to inject by osmosis the essence of violet through the skin of a hippopotamus."\*

### *Traditions of Freedom in Alsace*

Because Alsace was chiefly German it was thought that she would welcome restoration to the Empire, even though in the humble relation definable as that of a tenant on Imperial territory. "The relief of our brothers in chains in France" was part of the alleged motive for the invasion of Alsace.† But the "long-lost brothers," never at

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\* "*L'Allemand est aussi peu habitué à se mettre dans notre peau que nous repignons à nous mettre dans la sienne.*" (Marcel Sembat.)

† In *Alsace and Lorraine from Cæsar to Kaiser*, 1915, Ruth Putnam condenses the views of Herrmann Derichsweiler (*Geschichte Lothringens*, 1901). It appears that "the joy in Germany over the recovery of the lost lands was intense. It was thought that Lorraine would be like an ancient parchment whose original text had been covered by a new script, but not so much de-

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any time German in spirit, had grown up in another family, and they resented being made pawns in a game of diplomacy. Alsace had no love for any empire. She had held out against Louis XIV.

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stroyed that it could not be restored to legibility by a skilful hand. A discerning eye could detect the sub-structure of pristine customs, civilization and moral unity, evidences of a background essentially Germanic, just visible through the obscuring foreign tissue spread over it. But it was found that 'it was the outward form that had remained German, while the soul itself had altered.'" What knew they of Germany? During their absence in France "a spring spirit such as the world had never before experienced had breathed over the desolate intellectual wastes, and kissed into life a rich harvest of thought from which the noblest elements of the Ausland (foreign countries) have drawn their nourishment. Under the lead of divinely endowed men, the German nation has been rebuilt on a new plan. The man of Alsace or Lorraine knew nothing of our renaissance. So he returned a gallicised stranger to an empire grown strange in its new intellectual splendor. Only a wretched fragment of German speech remained to him, and this fragment was wholly insufficient for intellectual purposes. The only intellectual life he knew moved to French rhythm.'

"They had not attained the best that France could give her own children and they had lost all German idealism. They were strange hybrids. Their greatest loss was that half mystic feeling for nature, characteristic of young Germany. They did not possess that dreamy *ideality* (*träumerische Idealität*)."

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as she did against Napoleon. She had compelled Mazarin's assurance that the sole purpose of the French arms in Alsace was to insure the independence of the free cities, with no thought whatever of taking advantage.\*

The traditions of freedom in Alsace go back to the days of her "*Décapole*" or "Ten Free Cities" of the Holy Roman Empire. Strasburg was then a republic under the direction of a bishop, and the rest of Alsace was controlled by the League of Free Cities formed in 1353, at the suggestion of the Emperor, Charles IV. The League lasted unbroken for more than two hundred years. It comprised Mühlhausen, Colmar, Türrckheim, Rösheim, Münster, Schlettstadt, Hagenau, Weissenburg, Kaysersburg and Oberehnheim. Landau entered the League in 1511, and the largest of its members, Mühlhausen, left it in 1523 to join the more powerful Confederation of the Cantons of Switzer-

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\* "*Assurer l'indépendance des villes libres étant la seule fin que la France proposait . . . sans avoir pensée de leur tirer aucun avantage de tout le sang.*" (Mazarin, to the mayor of Colmar, 1648.)

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land. In their internal affairs these "free cities" were free from all outside control. Even after the date of 1681, when Louis XIV by the seizure of Strasburg finally carried Alsace into the kingdom of France, it was a maxim in politics not to disturb affairs; "*Il ne faut pas toucher les affaires d'Alsace.*"

National boundaries had not then acquired the fixity seen in our time. Nations, in the modern sense, did not exist under the feudal system. To belong to the Empire was mainly a matter of paying tribute on the part of cities and princes. The Empire did not defend the free cities against the raids of the "*Écorcheurs*" ("flayers"), English soldiers of fortune who roamed over France in intervals between wars. A portion of Alsace was once given in bond to Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, in return for a loan. The loan being paid off by the cities, they then incidentally beheaded the hated Burgundian governor, Peter de Hagenbach. Later Alsace was sold to Spain, but the deal was never consummated. The transfer of the Décapole to

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France was not therefore a matter which involved the breaking of any intimate ties, for no such bonds ever joined Alsace to the Holy Roman Empire.\* And of this empire, which in Voltaire's words was not an empire, was not holy and not Roman, Austria—not Germany—was the natural successor.

The claim of Germany to sovereignty over Alsace on account of the racial dialect of the people and on account of former association with an extinct "Holy Roman Empire" is, of course, an absurdity. France's claim to domination, in so far as it rests on history, is not much better. In justice and in right the sovereignty of Alsace belongs to the Alsatians, and in ideal conditions it would be for them and for them alone to determine their allegiance. This should be decided without intimidation, without duress and without bribery, a state

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\* "On the whole it may be said that the emperor's loss was a shadowy one. The loss was Strassburg's own. She deliberately renounced her freedom for fear of a worse fate if she resisted. . . . A piece of territory was not stolen from one monarch to another. Rather was a small business incorporated in a large one." (Ruth Putnam, *Alsace and Lorraine*, p. 75.)



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of affairs hardly to be brought about in the present organization of Europe.\*

Neither France with her mourning figure of Strasburg, as little as possible like an Alsatian maid, nor Germany with her "*Abwehrgesetze*," her laws of exception and repression, has ever quite grasped the present spirit of Alsace. Alsace favored France in spite of her Germanic blood, because she found in France friendly toleration and friendly lucidity of expression.

The noble statue at Belfort, the chief city of that part of Alsace still remaining in France, is full of suggestion. It is called "*Quand Même*" ("Nevertheless"). It represents not a classical figure like the statue at Paris but a real Alsatian girl, two broad bows of black ribbon on her head, supporting a dying French soldier and ready to grasp

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\* "*Là-dessus l'Allemand éclate de rire and quand l'Allemand commence à rire cela dure en général très longtemps. Vous pouvez, désormais, lui parler arbitrage, régime du droit, pacifisme, Il vous repondra 'Ja! Conférence! Majorité! Plus besoin de se battre! Ja! Compter les voix! Même résultat.'*" (Marcel Sembat.)



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his musket as he falls. Alsace loved France because she had learned to know her literature, and because France treated her as an equal and left her to control her own internal affairs herself. Alsace is discontented with Germany because Germany does not grant her equality and takes away her freedom. Her real affinity lies with Switzerland.\* In these matters language and race have no permanent significance. Said Napoleon's general, Foy: "If ever the love of all that is great and generous grows faint in the hearts of the people of old France, it will be necessary only for them to pass the Vosges into Alsace to recover their patriotism and their energy."

"It is notorious," said Count Schmettau, aide to Frederick the Great, "that Alsace is more French than the Parisians." (*"Plus français que les parisiens."*)

"Alsatians are more Gallic than the Gauls, because, being Germans, they can be more obstinately

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\* "*Pour un Suisse un compatriote de langue différente est plus cher qu'un étranger de la même langue.*" (Albert Oerl, Basle.)

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

French than the French themselves. They would leave a wound that would long be a menace to Europe." (Morier.) Once a general complained to Napoleon that his Alsatian soldiers spoke a Germanic jargon. "What matter?" said the Emperor. "They speak in German, but they *saber* in French." (Wetterlé.)

In Prussia the theory has been current for some time that France is decadent and corrupt,\* to be despised by the earnest student. Modern culture and modern science are products of German genius. But Alsace rejects this assertion. She looks upon the romantic veneration of the German for ancient forms as a kind of atavism, a return toward barbarism. The final evidence of the failure of the Prussian régime is its futility. It gets nowhere,

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\* General von Puttkammer, the governor who followed Baron Manteuffel, thus states this view in the pan-Germanist *Strasburger Post*: "The diminution of natality in France is the cause of the formation of the 'foreign legion.' It results from the physical degeneracy which dates from the time of Napoleon, who drained the blood of the youth of France on the fields of battle." In this vein the *Berliner Post* "regards it as a doubtful pleasure to fight a nation so decadent."

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not a step has been permanently taken, and if the bitterness of feeling has abated (1913) that is the work of time, not of "*Entwelschung*." No form of vote or plébiscite could settle the relations of Alsace-Lorraine, for the provinces would choose freedom with Germany "rather than bureaucracy with France."

French influences in Alsace-Lorraine scout the idea of a plébiscite on the score of democracy. Democratic principles would be violated in any plébiscite even if a fair popular vote could be obtained without intimidation, bribery or duress. The large accessions of immigrants to Strasburg and Metz from "Old Germany" should not, it is claimed, be allowed a vote in determining the future of Alsace. The Declaration and Protest of 1871 expressed the will of the provinces for all time.

Alsace wants freedom for development. If one asks an Alsatian whether he would be French or German, one rarely gets a direct answer. This reserve is not due to prudence. The question seems to him to miss the point. Preference for France

## ALSACE-LORRAINE AS "REICHSLAND"

or Germany is not the important thing. *Freedom* they want. Business interests unite Alsace closely with Baden and Bavaria. The most enlightened Alsatians earnestly hope that Germany will become more and more liberal along with the extension of democratic ideas, and that internal sympathy will modify the policy of "Blood and Iron." "We are between two fires" (*"entre deux feux"*), the reproaches of sympathizers in France and the petty aggravations of Prussian officials. "We must learn to think with our heads, not with our hearts! Our hearts call to France; our heads tell us that we find our future with Germany."\*

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\* "I recall this singular heart-cry uttered by all the journals in your (Prussian) pay: 'France fears us no longer.' As if to maintain the balance of power in Europe, France should be afraid of Germany!

"All the misunderstanding comes from this. You imagined dully that France since 1870 had been afraid. . . . You are convinced that the aim of aims in politics for a nation is to inspire fear in its neighbors.

"But my poor pan-Germanist, the other nations are not afraid. They are running on even keel. That is all. It is you who are afraid. You know why without daring to avow it. You are afraid because you know, like all the world, that property wrongly acquired 'profits never.'

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"The force of arms will eternally decide our fate. We are destined to be the plaything and the victim of all hates and of all wars. Never shall we be sincerely consulted. Never shall we be asked our desires with any intention that they should be granted."\*

### *The Nationalists in Upper Alsace*

Consequently there has arisen in Alsace, especially in Colmar and Mühlhausen, a group or party called "Particularist" or "Nationalist," loosely organized, but working in various ways toward the freedom of the province. These people resent the idea of political tutelage; it is as repugnant to them as the cognate one that they are mere appendages to the fortresses of Strasburg and Metz.

For it is recognized that the question of Alsace-Lorraine is mainly the question of Alsace; this

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You are retarded by your ideas." (Frœlich, *Le Pan-Germaniste en Alsace*.)

\* "*Les armes décideront à toute éternité de notre sort. Nous sommes destinés à être le jeu et les victimes de toutes les rancunes et de toutes les guerres. Jamais on ne nous consultera sincèrement. Jamais on ne nous demandera nos désirs avec la volonté d'y accéder.*"

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again is a question of industrial Strasburg on the one hand and of Ober-Elsass (Colmar and Mühlhausen) on the other. The fate of Lorraine is a secondary matter. This fact is realized in France. The lost provinces are symbolized always by the Alsatian maid, never by one of Lorraine. The French people mourn for Strasburg rather than for Metz. "Metz, a provincial town, stood for nothing vital. Strasburg, on the Rhine frontier, stood for that half-assimilated Teutonic element, an essential part of modern French culture." "For Strasburg enjoyed for centuries a unique privilege that the best friends of France and Germany would be glad to see restored."

## IV

### THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW\*

#### *There Is a Question of Alsace-Lorraine*

WE may now look at the case from the French point of view.

"There *is* a question of Alsace-Lorraine." It is a German question, but it concerns France and the whole world as well. It can be settled only by granting to the people equal rights within or without the Empire. The responsibility for failure rests with the Pan-Germanist war faction which dominates Prussia and which through Prussia rules Germany.

#### *Attitude of Alsace*

The present attitude of the majority of the people of Alsace (July, 1913) is concisely summed up in these three lines of current doggerel:

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\* The reader must continually keep in mind the fact that these studies were made in 1913, a year before the beginning of the war.

## THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

*“Français ne peux,  
Prussien ne veux,  
Alsacien suis.”*

*“Frenchman I can’t be,  
Prussian I won’t be,  
Alsatian I am.”*

The present hope of the provinces thus centers in Home Rule within the Empire. “Time will not heal our wounds, for the cause is not an event, but a condition.” Apparently to the Alsatians (1913) but one final result is possible—Elsass-Lothringen must be a self-governed state within the German Confederation. She will continue to cultivate the friendships which bind her to France. Her people will become increasingly bilingual and cosmopolitan in their sympathies. She must furnish her part of the cement which should bind Continental Europe into one system of good-will. This is the dream of the future, the hope of those who see a free Germany arising from her subservience to armored patriotism and military conscription. The theory of “Reichsland” or conquered territory may



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be good Imperial law, but it is not good politics and it is not good policy. Neither is it good *law*, for it is brigandage—the law of force and intimidation, not of right and order. “France might assign to Germany her sovereignty over Alsace; she could never sign away the rights of the people.”\*

Of going back to France there is now (1913) no question. To be recovered by war is a process inconceivably hideous.† Otherwise it is outside the domain of possibility. In words already quoted, “It would be a pitiable politician and a sorry strategist who would begin putting the national house in order for the great emergency by abandoning ‘*Die Wacht am Rhein.*’” That “the

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\* *Le droit de la guerre nous ne connaissons pas. Mais il est vrai et ceci ne dépend pas à nous ni de nos volontés, ni de nos adhésions, il est vrai qu'après un temps le fait brutal devient le fait accompli.*” (Sembat.)

“*Kein Kaiser kann was unser ist verschenken.*”

(Schiller.)

† “*Niemand in Elsass-Lothringen wünscht einen Krieg zwecks Wiedereinigung mit Frankreich.*” This statement has almost become a proverb. A Lorrainer asks, “Is it true? Who can probe the heart?”

## THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

great emergency”\* is itself a nightmare evoked by military preparedness does not change the problem. Most of the commerce of Alsace must necessarily be with Germany. Home Rule and autonomy within the German Empire might be more generally acceptable than to return as three minor departments in highly centralized France.† Political relations with France, it is generally agreed, are practically impossible. In so far, German officialism is right. The question of Alsace-Lorraine is Germany’s affair and for it no direct or immediate solution is possible. This is the essence of it, —“*Can Germany give her acquired province a freedom her own citizens have not yet achieved for themselves?*”

### *Alsace a “Buffer” State*

There are some few who hope to see the neutralization of Alsace-Lorraine, forming a “buffer” state, an independent, unfortified republic connect-

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\* See page 31.

† Before the cession to Germany, Alsace-Lorraine constituted three departments in France—Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin, Moselle, with also parts of Meurthe.

## [ALSACE-LORRAINE]

ing two similar states, Belgium and Luxembourg, with the republic of Switzerland. Such procedure would separate France from Germany by a neutral belt, distinct from both, protected by both, sympathetic with both. Even now, as in the days of Voltaire and Frederick the Great, there is nothing mutually exclusive in French and German culture.

It has been suggested that to give freedom to Alsace, France might offer in exchange Madagascar or the French Congo. But this project again is to all appearances outside the realm of practical politics. "Only a St. Louis can restore a conquest." To give up territory won by force would be, say Germans, to dishonor the graves of Wörth, of Gravelotte and of Mars-la-Tour. To free Alsace would be to confess the fundamental error of the policy of "blood and iron."

There is no value in the suggestion to restore Lorraine to France, still leaving Alsace left in Germany. "Alsace is dearer to the heart of France than Lorraine could ever be." No one in Alsace or Lorraine wants to see the united provinces now

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dismembered in any way. Once bound together in bonds of common misfortune, their ties have become very strong and close. German Lorraine, torn from Nancy and from France, now shares the Alsatian spirit, and the future of Alsace will determine her fate as well. The suggestion that the French-speaking communes in both districts be returned to France has no merit whatever. This would simply weaken Alsace-Lorraine, without in any way helping to settle the problems at issue. It would be a form of dismemberment. The feeling of a people in no way depends on the dialect they speak at home. The solution of the question lies entirely outside all matters of race or language. It turns wholly on the relation of Alsace-Lorraine to the Empire. Moreover, Metz, the chief town of Lorraine, is now more German than French. The old city is, of course, almost wholly French, but a new manufacturing center, wealthier and more populous, has been built by German capital about its railway station. In Germany I have heard it suggested that Alsace-Lorraine might be added to

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Baden, but this idea meets with no favor in the provinces. Further, no solution of the problem can be reached by dividing the provinces either lengthwise from north to south, or crosswise from east to west. There are "German-minded" ("*Deutschgesinnt*") people in almost every commune, but there is no German-minded district.

### *Home Rule in Alsace-Lorraine*

As to the details of Home Rule, public opinion diverges widely. In some degree the question becomes one of religion. I have tried in this paper to avoid all discussion of those phases of the problem which are entangled in German politics. The "Centrist," or clerical groups,\* of Alsace as of Germany, in general uphold the Prussian administration or "Right" as against the "Left"—radicals and socialists. Alsace and Lorraine are essentially Catholic districts. But Catholic opinion divides, as does other opinion, according to the individual

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\* Representatives of ecclesiasticism both Lutheran and Catholic.

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feeling and conscience. Some of the most noted of the leaders of Nationalism are honored as abbés by the Church. Other church leaders are equally devoted to the cause of Germanism. The attitude of Clericalism has vigorous opponents within the clergy in spite of the tendency to fall in line with constituted authority. With these few words we may leave the matter of Centrism otherwise untouched.

But it is probably true that the Catholics as a whole would prefer a monarchy to a republic. They look forward to a condition like that of the Grand Duchy of Baden, the "model grand duchy," which lies parallel to Alsace on the other side of the Rhine.

It would not be easy, however, to supply the provinces with a grand duke or a prince by promotion or by importation. "We can not make a new dynasty in the twentieth century." The princely families which swarm in middle Germany are relics of the feudal system. If progressive Germany were free from the element of hereditary

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rule, it would never take it up. It has accepted the dynastic right of the King of Prussia, who, under the circumstances, must also be Emperor. But only as a matter of historic succession are dukes, archdukes and bishops accepted by the Emperor as his august colleagues and subordinates. The selection of some Catholic prince as Landesherr would be acceptable to Lorraine, but probably not to Alsace. "Alsace is strong in the faith, but likewise prone to heresies, at times displaying a mysticism more profound than orthodox."\* From Catholic sources the author heard suggested as possible incumbents two Protestant princes of the North, Prince August-Wilhelm and Prince Oscar, both of whom have studied at the University of Strasburg and who are, therefore, in touch with Alsatian aspirations.

But to Alsace generally the word "autonomy" means the organization of a republic within the Empire. The leaders point to the free cities—

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\* "*Alsace, une terre de profonde foi, fut également fertile en hérésies. Elle a parfois une mysticisme plus profonde qu' orthodoxe.*"

## THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck—as models in this regard. Yet these cities were historically free, joining the Empire on their own terms. To create a new rural republic within the Empire seems to conservative Germany a dangerous experiment. Moreover if Alsace were a monarchy even, she would make herself a republican one, quite unlike the kingdom of Prussia in which aristocracy and plutocracy under the terms of the constitution must perpetually rule.

In Lorraine, and to a considerable extent in Alsace, the public schools are under clerical control, and many Catholics think it better to hold what they have than to struggle for an impossible freedom which from the point of view of the Church grows more and more undesirable. There is a Catholic element in France which favors war—any war—as a step toward the downfall of the republic. In this attitude they may be logical, for war in a republic might be followed by the restoration of monarchy.



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### *Democracy and Militarism Incompatible*

As Marcel Sembat has convincingly shown, (*Faites un Roi Sinon Faites la Paix*, 1912), the republic of France is near the parting of the ways.\* Democracy can not permanently exist amid the "Anarchy of Armament." The framework of successful war demands arbitrary rule, secret agreements, secret intrigues, and the subordination of civil progress to the interests of militarization. Hence, Sembat argues, the differences with Germany must be somehow adjusted if the Republic is to endure. It has been militarized against its will and in response to outside efforts at intimidation. If war becomes a nation's *chief business* it must provide itself with a king, with all the attributes of instantaneous decision and of martial law. If France is to remain free, its first need is to make friends with her neighbors and with them to develop the instruments for peaceful adjustment

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\* The Pan-Germanist movement and the failure of diplomacy left France no choice and Sembat is himself a member of the present war cabinet of France (1915).

## THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

of international difference, with the disposition to avoid needless quarrels. Says Sembat: "If we would keep out of the fire, let us refrain from asking Germany for what she can not give us. She can not give us Alsace-Lorraine, not even a little slice of it. She can not exchange it in whole or in part against colonies, not even all our colonies. She can not give us even their neutrality. I do not even believe, and I have reason, that she will consent to discuss their autonomy as a condition preliminary to an agreement (Franco-German) of which this is the natural and certain end. Let us not demand the impossible: this wisdom will permit us to obtain everything possible. If we despise war-like enthusiasms it is because we know another enthusiasm and another war which seems to us superior and from whose heights we view with compassion this old soldierly enthusiasm which we have known and surmounted. . . . *War demands a King: the Republic demands Peace.\**

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\* "La guerre exige un roi! La République exige la Paix!"

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Among the French peasantry of Lorraine one hears little of the broader politics, which most of them regard as of minor importance. Life goes on easily, quietly, humbly, just as it slips by in the French villages beyond Mars-la-Tour. No one reads German papers. A few read the French journals in Metz, but world-politics lies far away. A chief complaint in rural Lorraine is that taxes are too high and that they are growing higher. The view of the German peasant seems not to be very different from this. It is not in the country communes, French or German, that the problems of self-government are pressing.

The situation of Alsace-Lorraine seems in the long run hopeful for the cause of freedom. Obstacles vanish as men arise to remove them. Alsace and Lorraine both have the task to keep alive their local identity, their traditions of culture, their economic prosperity. They must lead in any movements which tend toward the reconciliation of France and Germany. They must lend no encour-

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agement to Chauvinist or Pan-Germanist. The peace society lately formed at Mühlhausen, the Franco-German League in Paris, the "Friedensfreunde"\* in South Germany all have many adherents in both nations. Alsace-Lorraine should aid in the liberal movements of Germany. Some day the influence of Alsace may turn the scale in behalf of German freedom.† Some day Germany will point the way forward from Bismarck and von Moltke to the ideals of Schiller, Heine and Kant. "When that time comes, this great nation, the second Fatherland of every cultured man, shall stand for honor and justice, and the prophecy of Heine shall come true. Not only Alsace-Lorraine, but the whole world in this ideal sense shall be German."‡

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\* "Friends of Peace"; in 1913 a large and influential organization holding annual congresses.

† "Give now to Alsace-Lorraine the liberty and the dignity of a German state. I am convinced that Alsace-Lorraine is ready to accept it and even that she wishes it and asks it of us. . . . Then peace is possible, or the King and Revenge!" (Marcel Sembat: *Faites un Roi, Sinon Faites la Paix.*)

‡ Albert L. Guérard, in a personal letter, 1913.

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### *War No Solution*

The following statements, quoted from leading Alsatians, are typical of the attitude of a great majority of them:

“War is the worst possible solution of our problems, because war is no solution. With war there is never a solution of any question. Alsace has been part of Germany, of Austria, of France, and now of Germany again. If France should gain Alsace by war, it would be only the beginning of another war, and so on without end. Our hope is in the change of feeling in Germany, the growth of a free-minded party ( *‘freisinnige Partei’* ), and in the rising demand for local rights and local freedom among the German people in the place of concentrated paternalism.”

“Some Alsatians think that our purposes may be best attained by continuous local agitation as a means of educating Germany. Most of us think a quiet patience better. Agitation only makes it harder to come to mutual understanding.” “We

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have grown up under a régime more democratic than Germany — especially Prussia — has ever known. We should do our best to be good citizens of Alsace, and this will have its weight in Germany, for the German people, outside the military group, are men like ourselves.” “We have a ‘*mariage de raison*’ with Germany; let us make the best of it.” “Children will always regret their mother, but they need not hate their stepmother.”

“Every solution implying war is to be rejected. No definite solution could result from a Franco-German war, by which Alsace would find herself cut into two parts, each to destroy the other. A war, whatever its result, provokes always the desire of revenge and leads to indefinite international disorder, in which the antagonism among different elements would be greatly intensified. Other questions of high importance are rising to the surface (social, moral, educational questions) demanding solution; for all these questions, implying higher ideals than the cheap quarrels between nations, is demanded the collaboration of all men of good-

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will, who should ignore all national frontiers. It is inadmissible that the question of Alsace-Lorraine should indefinitely hold back the general development of Europe. A Franco-German entente would necessitate for Alsace-Lorraine a government according to its own will. It would thus destroy the worst obstacle to the pacification of Europe and open to civilization new lines of progress.

“This solution which, in assuring peace to the world, would guarantee the development of Alsace and Lorraine, would nevertheless offend two powerful influences—the self-conceit of two nations and the interest of the war system. It is for the people of these provinces to say loudly and clearly that the demand be made the friendly bridge between two civilizations, not the glacis of a fort nor yet the field of battle. This is the meaning of the meetings at Mühlhausen, and the vote of the Landtag: ‘No War;\* Franco-German reconciliation, and Autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine!’ ”

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\* In all Alsace I found but two persons who claimed that the ultimate solution was to be found in war.

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### *Solution Through Franco-German Entente*

The feeling of the intelligent and conservative republicans in Alsace may be summed up in the following paragraphs:

The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871 was a capital fault which has influenced in an unfortunate manner all the evolution of Europe and particularly that of France and Germany for the last forty years. The arguments given by the Germans at present to justify this annexation (the German language spoken in Alsace, the recapture of territories once belonging to the Empire) will not bear examination. It is incontestable that in 1871, in spite of the Germanic dialects spoken in Alsace, in spite of questions of race, although the land once belonged to the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation (to which the Empire of Austria was the successor rather than the new German Empire) yet the sentiment in all classes of the population was almost without exception in favor of French rule.



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France was at that time the Fatherland for every Alsatian and for every Lorrainer as for all other Frenchmen. The proof is given in the devotion with which the people of Alsace and Lorraine alike fought against Germany, as well as by the statements at the national assembly at Bordeaux (the protest of the deputies of the lands annexed) as well as at the first German Reichstag. The annexation to the German Empire, then, took place contrary to the wish almost unanimous of the people of Alsace-Lorraine, and without that population having been in any way consulted. On the contrary they showed by every means in their power how repugnant this annexation was to them.

In 1871 the sole title of Germany to the possession of Alsace-Lorraine was the so-called "right of conquest." There is a singular persistence in certain quarters of this spirit of mind. To give but a single example, this very year the general (von Deimling) commanding the army corps at Strasburg spoke of Alsace-Lorraine as "*unsere Eroberungen*" (our conquests).

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It appears from an impartial examination of history that the war of 1870-71 was desired by the military party of each of the two countries and that if France had been victorious she would have annexed German territory. It appears as if the two parties had arranged the "right of conquest," as a writer of the time has said, in some fashion as the "rule of the game."

In the first year after the war, during the delay of "option" for French nationality (until October, 1872), and still later, there was a considerable exodus of families and of individuals desiring to hold French citizenship. The principal reason for this exodus was the desire not to do military service in Germany, as Germany after 1872 obliged all the young men born French to bear arms.

One of the principal reasons which impelled them to escape military service was the idea that a war of *revanche* was imminent and that as German soldiers they would be forced to fight against the French and against their own relatives. As a result many families find themselves part German,

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part French and part Swiss, being at the same time Alsatian in spirit.

The administration of the first years after the war was almost entirely in the hands of the "immigrants." The people of Alsace-Lorraine hated to serve the new government. Functionaries came from all parts of Germany, but especially from the North, where the character of the people is very different. They neither knew the land nor the population, and for the most part they were badly chosen. There was thus formed in the provinces two different elements, the first composed of natives remaining in the country, the other of immigrant Germans. The latter class comprised almost all the officials. During forty years these elements have existed side by side with but small degree of fusion, notwithstanding the efforts made at times for conciliation.

Since 1871 there have been notable changes in the situation. The generation of natives born since the war has ceased to consider France as its native land, having no direct communication with that

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country and no longer taking part in its life. In place of sentiment for France and in spite of the protest of 1871, there has grown up a movement for autonomy, looking forward to an Alsace-Lorraine enjoying political rights equal to those of the German states, not in theory alone (for the constitution of the Empire seems to give the same rights as to other citizens) *but in practise*. This autonomy should offer the people of Alsace-Lorraine the opportunity to develop themselves along the lines traced by their character and history, and on an equality not alone of law, but of fact, with other Germans.

On the other hand, the sons of the immigrant German officials, born largely in the country, have come more or less into the Alsatian way of thinking, and the character of these functionaries has correspondingly improved. The doubtful elements of the earlier years have been in part gradually eliminated. But the fusion is still far from complete. Antagonism persists between North Germans and South Germans. With the latter, Alsace

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especially has many ideas in common. The hostility is constantly aggravated by the chauvinistic journals of both parties who find in it their reason for existence and by certain military elements who understand no rôle save that of conquerors.

The solution of the question of Alsace-Lorraine must rest in the fusion of the different interests so that both interests and traditions shall be safeguarded. A Franco-German understanding seems the necessary preliminary to this solution.

A preliminary to this understanding and not a consequence, because Germany will never allow her treatment of Alsace-Lorraine to depend on any international entente, and such entente is not necessary, for with an international understanding, the question of Alsace-Lorraine would lose its sharpness. The native population, sure that no war with France would take place, would have less repugnance to the military service. They would run no risk of fighting a nation with which they had profound sympathies. The elements of French

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culture ingrained in Alsace and especially in the French part of annexed Lorraine would cease to be antipathetic and would strive to become assimilated. Economic relations already exist demanding the maintenance of commercial union with other parts of the Empire. These would be redoubled under normal social relations, which would then be possible not only with the immigrants but with Germany in general.

In fact, no element of the population would fear menace from any other, and friendship for France grown up through family relations could freely manifest itself without the slightest hostility to Germany or to her government. This is not the case to-day when any sign of friendliness toward France is considered in certain quarters as enmity toward Germany.

If the opposition between France and Germany existed no longer, Germany would have no reason to fear hostile acts nor to refuse the freedom necessary to the development of Alsace-Lorraine.

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Moreover, the province is to-day perfectly capable of repressing any disorder among the different elements inhabiting her territories.

Every military solution is to be rejected. No definite solution could result from Franco-German war, in which Alsace-Lorraine would be torn into two parts, each destroying the other. A war, whatever its result, would provoke the desire of revenge. It would result in an international malady of indefinite duration, with the antagonism among the various elements more and more exasperated. Meanwhile many questions rise to the horizon, questions social, moral, educational, which demand solution. For all these problems which require a higher ideal than that of petty international quarrels there is needed coöperation of all men of good will.

It is not admissible that the question of Alsace-Lorraine should retard indefinitely the general development of Europe. The Franco-German understanding, with the granting to Alsace-Lorraine a government responding to its wishes, would remove

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the worst obstacle to the general pacification of Europe and would open to civilization new lines of progress.

“This solution which, in assuring the peace of the world, would guarantee the development of the two provinces, would unfortunately offend the vanity of both countries as well as give displeasure to powerful interests. It is for the people of Alsace-Lorraine to demand it loudly and clearly. They may thus come to *form the bridge between two nations instead of being a fortress and a battlefield*. NO WAR, A FRANCO-GERMAN UNDERSTANDING AND AUTONOMY FOR ALSACE-LORRAINE.”\*

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\* In Alsace-Lorraine in 1913 there were many German immigrants, men of education, largely in business or in scientific pursuits, who were in full sympathy with the point of view here set forth.



## V

### NATIONALISM

#### *The Nationalists in Alsace*

**T**HERE are some who are not satisfied with the slow progress of political evolution. Such men are found in Strasburg and Metz as well as in Mühlhausen and Colmar. This party group of "nationalists" claim that agitation also educates, and they have used the forces of journalism and of cartoons, of merry raillery and of biting sarcasm in the interest of the autonomous republic. Says Jules Froelich in *Le Pangermaniste en Alsace*: "Pan-germanism is the exotic which ruins the color of Alsace." "It is evident that the only obstacle to the definite Germanization of Alsace is the Pan-germanist alone, the odious Pan-germanist under all his disguises, the Pan-germanist journal-

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ist,\* the Pan-germanist functionary, the Pan-germanist magnate, the Pan-germanist pedagogue, the Pan-germanist ecclesiastic, the Pan-germanist policeman, the Pan-germanist higher officer, the Pan-germanist subaltern, the Pan-germanist industrialist, the Pan-germanist trader. There is also the feminine Pan-germanist, and we have to call on all the vestiges of gallantry remaining to us from French times to induce us not to speak of her. That is all to her profit. When the last Pan-germanist shall be put under the sod, on that very day Alsace will find herself germanized as if by enchantment and with the best grace in the world.† On that same day we shall have seen, sure as the dawn arises, *the United States of Europe to which the Pan-germanists constitute the sole obstacle*, the

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\* A German journalist in Alsace-Lorraine reminded me that "there is also a question of bread and butter" ("*une question de pain et beurre*") which most editorial writers have to consider.

† "*Alors le jour où le dernier pangermaniste sera enfin rentré sous terre, ce-jour-là, l'Alsace se trouvera germanisée comme par enchantement et de la première grace du monde.*"

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day when international fraternity between states will efface them or leave them to retain only a conventional and administrative significance."

Among the more active republicans in the provinces are Léon Boll of the *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine* at Strasburg, the Abbé E. Wetterlé, editor of *La Nouvelliste* at Colmar, Doctor Blumenthal, mayor of the town, Marie Schmitt, editor of *Le Messin* at Metz, and the inimitable artist, Jean Jacques Waltz of Colmar, known as "Oncle Hansi" ("Uncle Johnny") and as "Professor Knautschke." "Oncle Hansi" published some years ago a charming *Histoire d'Alsace* for the children of Alsace and of France, "those who do not forget." The illustrations of Alsatian people and Alsatian history were gracefully drawn, but neither text nor pictures were flattering to the Prussians. The sale of the work was forbidden in Germany, but joyously promoted in Belfort and Nancy. In 1913 its author was crowned by the French Academy at Paris.\*

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\* Another book by Hansi in 1913, *Mon Village*, in which French sympathies were avowedly shown and Prussian officials were keenly satirized, led to the au-

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At one time Abbé Wetterlé, well known as an orator, delivered in France a lecture in the French language on the question of Alsace.\* This author's arrest and trial at Leipzig for high treason. This was changed later to a charge of exciting dissension, of which Waltz was convicted and sentenced to a year's imprisonment in Danzig. Being released on bail, he escaped to France with the assistance or connivance of his friends.

\* Abbé Wetterlé's address, delivered at Havre, Evreux, Rouen and Tours, closes with the following words:

"The day of recrimination is past. We are already on the way to use an imperfect instrument to try to obtain more and better. . . .

"One can not be constantly heroic. Placed between the menace of brutal repression and the bait of unmerited recompenses the feebleness of certain characters appears. . . .

"Germany has not thus far known how to show herself generous. At the three extremities of her territory, oppressed nationalities trouble her internal peace. Germanism wishes to level everything. This results only in provoking sudden checks in the work of assimilation. . . . As for us who are desirous of maintaining our old reputation as '*têtes carrées*,' nothing shall turn us from our line of conduct. Thanks to our organized resistance, we may already consider the day of great persecutions terminated. . . . Our laws of exception are still numerous, but slowly we have worn away their angles. Our cause is good. It will triumph unless the effort is made useless by tragic events which no one can foresee and which we should be criminally selfish to desire."

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dress, printed under the title of *Le Sentiment Populaire en Alsace-Lorraine*, was moderate in tone, but for delivering it the lecturer was sent to prison for two months. A cartoon by "Oncle Hansi" shows the little priest looking out from behind the prison bars, with below him the inscription, "*Lieb Vaterland mag ruhig sein.*"\*

In a Mühlhausen weekly paper, *Dur's Elsass*, printed in Alsatian dialect, Henri Zislin has published a series of remarkable cartoons. One of these, drawn at the beginning of the Balkan War, represents Austria as the Ogre ("*Kindlifresser*") watching with smacking lips the play of three children—Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. Dame Germany advises her not to bite, "I ate two such once and I found them very bad for the digestion." Under the title of *Sourires d'Alsace* ("Alsatian Smiles") a volume of these cartoons from *Dur's Elsass* has been published with an introduction

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\* A line from the national hymn, "*Die Wacht am Rhein*," "Dear Fatherland may rest in peace."

## THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

by Paul Déroulède. The book gives a vivid insight into the feelings of the aggressive Alsatian nationalists. In the sketch, "*Deux Opinions*," an Alsatian on the heights of the Vosges says to his son: "Do not forget, my boy, that it is the work and sweat of our fathers which has fertilized this soil, and by the iron of the plow they have won it. This land belongs indeed to us." Opposite, a Prussian addresses his son: "Forget not, my boy, that it is by blood, iron and fire that our fathers conquered this land. It is therefore ours and will remain so."

The point of view of the active nationalists has been summed up as follows:

"Whether our aim is possible in our lifetime or not, that is not our concern. It is our right, and so it becomes our duty as free men to speak. A lesson of our history is this. We have endured the Huns, the Vandals and the Pandours, and Alsace is still Alsace. Let us hope for better days, my children; for the future, do not forget, be-

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longs to the good God and not to the ugly fellow who presides over the Pan-germanist League.”\*

### *Three Duties of Alsace*

“Our duties in Alsace,” says a deputy from Mühlhausen, a German by origin, “are plainly these three:

“To avert war, first and foremost.

“To use every effort toward the liberalizing of public opinion among our compatriots in Germany.

“To cease irritating agitation for what we know we can not get. Agitation heats the blood and makes for enmity, not friendship.”

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\* “*Non pas au vilain bonhomme qui préside sur la ligue pangermaniste.*”

THE END











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